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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OMAHA/VALLEY NE  
800 AM CST MON MAR 29 2004

...TODAY BEGINS SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN IOWA AND NEBRASKA...

GOVERNORS TOM VILSACK AND MIKE JOHANNES...THE IOWA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION...THE NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAVE DESIGNATED THE WEEK OF MARCH 29 TO APRIL 2 AS SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN IOWA AND NEBRASKA. EACH MORNING THIS WEEK...THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN VALLEY WILL ISSUE A PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT FOCUSING ON A DIFFERENT ITEM EACH DAY. TOPICS THIS YEAR INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING...

MONDAY...SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS  
TUESDAY...FLOODS  
WEDNESDAY...TORNADOES AND THE STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILL AT 1000 AM  
THURSDAY...HEAT  
FRIDAY...SEVERE WEATHER AND FLASH FLOOD PRODUCTS

ATTENTION MEDIA...IN ORDER FOR SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK TO BE EFFECTIVE...MEDIA COVERAGE IS CRITICAL. PLEASE USE THE INFORMATION IN THE PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENTS IN YOUR NEWS PROGRAMS TO HELP PROMOTE SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE MEDIA INTERVIEWS. PLEASE CONTACT BRIAN SMITH AT 402-359-5166 IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

TODAY/S TOPIC IS SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS...

EACH YEAR ON AVERAGE IOWA AND NEBRASKA SEES ABOUT 100 TORNADOES...TENS OF FLASH FLOOD EVENTS...HUNDREDS OF SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS...AND THOUSANDS OF NON-SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS. IT IS HOPED THAT BY USING THESE PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENTS...THE PUBLIC CAN BE BETTER EDUCATED ON THE DANGERS OF SEVERE WEATHER AND PROTECTIVE ACTIONS NEEDED TO SAVE LIVES.

BY DEFINITION...A SEVERE THUNDERSTORM MUST CONTAIN HAIL THAT IS THREE QUARTER INCH IN DIAMETER OR LARGER...STRAIGHT LINE WINDS OF 58 MPH OR STRONGER...AND/OR A TORNADO. THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ISSUES SEVERE THUNDERSTORM AND TORNADO WATCHES AND WARNINGS FOR SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS.

THUNDERSTORM SAFETY...  
WHAT YOU CAN DO!

BEFORE THE STORM...

- KNOW THE COUNTY IN WHICH YOU LIVE AND THE NAMES OF NEARBY MAJOR CITIES. SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS ARE ISSUED BY COUNTIES.
- CHECK THE WEATHER FORECAST BEFORE LEAVING TO BE OUTDOORS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS.
- WATCH FOR SIGNS OF APPROACHING STORMS.

- IF A STORM IS APPROACHING...KEEP A NOAA WEATHER RADIO OR AM/FM RADIO WITH YOU.
- POSTPONE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IF THUNDERSTORMS ARE IMMINENT. THIS IS YOUR BEST WAY TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION.
- CHECK ON THOSE WHO HAVE TROUBLE TAKING SHELTER IF SEVERE WEATHER THREATENS.

WHEN THUNDERSTORMS APPROACH...

- REMEMBER: IF YOU CAN HEAR THUNDER...YOU ARE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE STORM TO BE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING. GO TO SAFE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!
- MOVE TO A STURDY BUILDING OR CAR. DO NOT TAKE SHELTER IN SMALL SHEDS...UNDER ISOLATED TREES...OR IN CONVERTIBLE AUTOMOBILES.
- IF LIGHTNING IS OCCURRING AND A STURDY SHELTER IS NOT AVAILABLE... GET INSIDE A HARD TOP AUTOMOBILE AND KEEP WINDOWS UP.
- GET OUT OF BOATS AND AWAY FROM WATER.
- TELEPHONE LINES AND METAL PIPES CAN CONDUCT ELECTRICITY. UNPLUG APPLIANCES NOT NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING WEATHER INFORMATION. AVOID USING THE TELEPHONE OR ANY ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES. USE PHONES ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY.
- DO NOT TAKE A BATH OR SHOWER.
- TURN OFF AIR CONDITIONERS. POWER SURGES FROM LIGHTNING CAN OVERLOAD THE COMPRESSORS.

IF CAUGHT OUTDOORS AND NO SHELTER IS NEARBY...

- FIND A LOW SPOT AWAY FROM TREES...FENCES AND POLES. MAKE SURE THE PLACE YOU PICK IS NOT SUBJECT TO FLOODING.
- IF YOU ARE IN THE WOODS..TAKE SHELTER UNDER THE SHORTER TREES.
- IF YOU FEEL YOUR SKIN TINGLE OR YOUR HAIR STAND ON END...SQUAT LOW TO THE GROUND ON THE BALLS OF YOUR FEET. PLACE YOUR HANDS ON YOUR KNEES WITH YOUR HEAD BETWEEN THEM. MAKE YOURSELF THE SMALLEST TARGET POSSIBLE AND MINIMIZE YOUR CONTACT WITH THE GROUND.
- IF YOU ARE BOATING OR SWIMMING...GET TO LAND AND FIND SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!

FOR MORE SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION ON-LINE...GO TO THE DES MOINES NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WEB SITE AT [WWW.CRH.NOAA.GOV/OAX](http://WWW.CRH.NOAA.GOV/OAX).

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